

CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 7058

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 775

Transportation Committee

Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director

Connecticut Land Conservation Council

February 13, 2019

Co-Chairs Leone and Lemar, Vice-Chairs Bergstein and Simms, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin, and members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council in support of **HB 7058**, An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Greenways Account and **SB 775**, An Act Concerning the Creation of the Central Connecticut Loop Trail.

As the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+/- land trusts, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

CLCC strongly supports HB 7058 which would ensure that funds generated by the Greenways license plate program are dedicated to the purposes for which they were established. The public counts on dedicated funds as a consistent source of revenue in support of specific and important programs. Diverting dedicated funds from their intended purposes erodes public confidence and trust, making people less likely to participate in the program. Moreover, to further the efficiency and efficacy of the Greenways license plate program, CLCC concurs with the recommendation of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) that the funds be dedicated toward the types of projects funded through the DEEP's Recreational Trails and Greenways Program (C.G.S. Section 23-103).

CLCC also supports SB 775, which would connect the Air Line Trail and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. As noted in CFPA's testimony, the construction of 16 additional miles of trail would create a central Connecticut loop trail spanning 111 miles and connecting two major commuter rail stations. In addition to their obvious recreational and environmental benefits, trails and greenways offer public health, economic and transportation benefits, and enhance quality of life and community pride.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments. As always, we would be happy to answer any questions you may have and provide additional information about the wonderful land conservation work undertaken every day in communities across the state.

